

August 2, 2018

The Hon. Orrin Hatch  
104 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Hon. Michael Bennet  
261 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Hon. John Cornyn  
517 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Hon. Mark Warner  
703 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Hatch, Senator Bennet, Senator Cornyn, and Senator Warner:

We are a group of local, state, and national organizations committing to advancing evidence-based policies that increase the number of well-prepared, well-supported teacher leaders, principals, and other school leaders in every school, especially those serving the students and communities most in need. We are writing to express our support for the Teacher and School LEADERS Act.

As you know, more than a decade of research shows just how crucial it is that our schools be led by well-prepared, well-supported principals. School leaders account for 25 percent of a school's impact on student learning, and an above-average principal can improve student achievement by 20 percentage points. Moreover, like workers in any other profession, the best teachers want to work for the best bosses. Outstanding school leaders attract and retain great educators: fully 97 percent of teachers list principal quality as critical to their retention and career decisions—more than any other factor. And school leaders transform the lowest-performing schools, where the positive effects of strong leadership on student achievement are most pronounced. In fact, a landmark study found “virtually no documented instances of troubled schools being turned around without intervention by a powerful leader.”

The Teacher and School LEADERS Act includes many improvements to Title II of the Higher Education Act (HEA) and, overall, we are thrilled that your proposal incorporates school leadership in a far more robust way.

Of particular note, we are pleased the Teacher and School LEADERS Act would:

- Explicitly expand the Teacher Quality Partnerships (TQP) program—renamed the Teacher, Principal, and Other School Leader Quality Enhancement program—to fund the preparation and support of teacher leaders, principals, and other school leaders (in addition to teachers).
- Update current law such that the new Teacher, Principal, and Other School Leader Quality Enhancement program would support—and make eligible for grant funding—a wider range of programs that prepare teachers, principals, and schools leaders *and* meet clear standards of quality, including those run by institutions of higher education as well as nonprofits and other entities that provide alternative routes to educator certification, such as states, districts, and charter management organizations.

In addition, the Teacher and School LEADERS Act would:

- Add a new priority for high-quality applicants whose practices have the strongest evidence of effectiveness, directing federal funds toward programs and partnerships proven to make a difference for students;
- Adopt an improved definition and uses of funds for school leader residencies that reflect research-based elements;
- Incorporate school leadership programs into accountability measures within the bill, supporting greater transparency and fostering continuous program improvement;
- Include a stronger focus on high-need schools, advancing equity by targeting educator quality improvement efforts that support the students and communities with greatest need; and
- Ensure greater alignment between the HEA and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), including by simplifying and streamlining definitions and provisions.

Getting well-prepared, well-supported leaders in every school is a bipartisan cause, and we thank you for your continued efforts to advance effective, equitable leadership.

Sincerely,

Center for the Study of Education Policy  
 Council for Exceptional Children  
 Deans for Impact  
 Democrats for Education Reform  
 EdAllies (MN)  
 Educators for Excellence  
 Hope Street Group  
 Knowledge Alliance  
 National Center for Learning Disabilities  
 National Council of Teachers of English  
 New Leaders  
 NJ Principals and Supervisors Association  
 NYC Leadership Academy  
 Profound Gentlemen  
 TASH  
 Teach Plus